

special
COLLECTIONS
DOUGLAS
Library



QUEEN'S UNIVERSITY
AT KINGSTON

KINGSTON ONTARIO CANADA

A
L E T T E R
T O A

Member of Parliament,

Concerning the REPEAL of the

Corporation and Test Acts.

By a GENTLEMAN of the *Middle Temple*.

Religion — Politicks. — *There's a couple of
Topicks for you, no more like one another
than Oil and Vinegar; and yet these two
beaten together by a State-Cook, make
Sauce for the whole Nation.*

CONGREVE'S LOVE for LOVE.

L O N D O N:

Printed for J. ROBERTS, at the Oxford-
Arms in Warwick-Lane. 1739.

(Price Six-pence.)

AC311.1737.G46



A
L E T T E R
T O A

Member of Parliament, &c.

S I R,



F the *Publick* and *National Grievances* do not engross all your *Thoughts*, give me Leave to whisper to You the *particular* Complaints of a *part* of your Fellow-Subjects ; which, tho' they may seem to regard a Matter of a less general Nature, are in truth no less worthy

Your Attention, and such as it no less
 concerns *them* to make. When I tell You
 the Subject of these Complaints is the
 Abridgment of the Common Right of Sub-
 jects, long, yet undeservedly, suffer'd on
 account of *Opinions* purely *Religious*; You
 will easily perceive, I mean the Body of
Protestant Dissenters of *England* causlessly
 secluded, branded, oppress'd by injurious
 and unreasonable *Test-Laws*. And unless
 it be said that Years give a Sanction to
 Hardships, and that Sufferings, like our
 Estates, become our establish'd and fix'd
 Inheritance thro' Length of Possession; it
 must surely be allow'd, that it is *now* time
 to take off these *distinguishing Badges*, that
 all who have the same Common Right,
 may enjoy the same Common Lot. While
 Members of a *Christian Church*, out of
 Concern, as they wou'd have it thought,
 and in support of *Religion*, but void of
 the true Spirit of *Christianity*, oppose the
 Relief of their *Protestant Brethren* —
 While

While the pretended Friends of our *Constitution* cry out against the avowed and real Friends of *Liberty* — While some wickedly represent, and others weakly believe them dangerous, and Enemies to the State — It is hoped the free, the unbiassed Members of a *British Parliament* will consider this Matter with Christian Hearts and Tempers, as Friends to *Liberty*, and free from *Prejudice*. Therefore, Sir, to assert the Common Right of Subjects, to vindicate those who are thus unjustly censured and suspected, and to beg Your Interest and Assistance in their Redress, is the Intent and End of this Application. Let not the Obscureness of the Writer be a Reason for your neglecting what is here said ; but rather let the Importance of the Subject engage Your particular Notice ; remembering that any undue Restraint on a particular Subject, is an Infringement of the general Liberty of all : While I, on my Part, shall pursue this Address as briefly as
may

may be, but with all Freedom and Truth, convinced as I am, that in the *Cause of Liberty*, the Pen of her meanest Son is well and meritoriously employ'd in her Defence.

Need I point out the distinct Provinces of *Religion* and *Civil Government*, or mark their proper Limits? This has been the noble and well executed Task of Genius's who are the Glory and the Blessings of this Nation. Let us however set their two different Characters in Opposition: The End of the *one* is the Preservation and Security of *Property*; the End of the *other*, is the *Salvation of Souls*; *one* acts by temporal *Punishments* and *coërcive Means*; the *other* by *Persuasion* and *Conviction*: *One* respects *outward Acts*, as they may affect *others*; Religion depends on the *inward Sentiments* and Opinion merely, and is every Man's *private Concern*: The Authority of the *one* is founded on the *Alienation* of the Right
of

of each Man in the State of Nature, so far as is necessary for the general Good of Men in Society ; the Rights of the other are *Unalienable*.

As to *Liberty* in general, no People, I believe, ever willingly gave up more than was necessary to the End of Government, or at least, more than they were persuaded was so ; more than this ought not to be taken from them. As a Liberty greater than this, tends to *Licentiousness* ; so a greater Restraint is a Degree of *Slavery*. If this Restraint respects a *part* only of the Body of the People, it will by them be more sensibly felt ; and the more so still, and will still appear the more groundless and unreasonable, if it regard that Branch of Liberty, which by Right ought not, and in its Nature, cannot properly be under the Controul of another. But, Sir, this is the Case, and such the Restraint of the *Protestant Dissenters* of *England* : They have in common with their Fellow-Subjects,

jects, a Natural *Capacity* for, and *Right* to Places and Offices in the State ; yet are render'd *incapable* of them by the Force of Standing Laws, making their Religious Opinions a perpetual Bar : When I say they have a *Right*, I don't forget the *discretionary* Power with which the Government is *intrusted*, of employing such Subjects as it shall think most fit and worthy ; yet even in this unlimited Power, *Prudence*, *Justice* and *Equity* recommend an *impartial* Distribution among Subjects, according to their *Abilities* ; but to *exclude* a considerable and worthy part of them, by *perpetual Edicts*, can scarce be thought consistent with a *fair and equal Administration*. Tho' these Laws may seem to be express'd *conditionally*, yet they operate as an *absolute* Exclusion upon all, who by not being able to comply with the Condition, fall within the Description of the Persons mention'd in them ; and many such there are.

But

But when, besides this Incapacity and Exclusion, it is even insisted that by these Laws, at least one of them, *Dissenters* are still obliged to take upon them *Offices* of *Burthen* and *Expence*, notwithstanding this Bar against them, even tho' they cannot Places of *Honour* and *Profit* ; when their Refusal is exclaim'd against in Discourse and in Print, as unjust and unreasonable ; when *Fines* have been imposed for such Refusal ; and when, at this very time, a Prosecution is loudly threaten'd for a Fine set on this Account, upon *one* Gentleman of this Persuasion, and several *others* are mark'd out for future *Victims* ; I would fain know what this is less than *Persecution*. *Persecution* it is, and such it will appear to all who consider Things *Themselves*, rather than by what *Name* they are called ; and such a *Persecution*, as is a kind of *Egyptian Severity*.

The *Usefulness* of *Religion* to *Civil Government* is manifest, and acknowledg'd by all ; and to urge this to the *Dissenters* is *needless*, since they insist upon it equally with *Church-Men* ; and 'tis *unfair*, as it impliedly charges them with maintaining or supposing the contrary. But, Sir, this must be understood of the *Spirit*, not the *Form* of *Religion* : 'Tis *Real Religion* only is thus useful, as it disposes Men to a due *Observance* and *Performance* of their *Duty* in every State of Life ; 'tis the true and just *Sense* of Religion ; and is to be consider'd by the State, as a Part of general *Virtue*. And thus, properly the Concern of the *Civil Government*, can be only to see that Men be *Religious*, as it is to see them *Virtuous* ; and to punish *Irreligion*, as they would *Vice*. And 'tis as absurd to say, that *Religion* is a *Constituent* Part of *Civil Government*, as to say that *Virtue* is so. Different *Sects* of *Religion* should be consider'd now, as different *Sects* of *Philosophy* were formerly. *Forms* and
Modes

Modes of Religion may be *establiſh'd*, but *Religion itſelf* can be *establiſh'd* only in the *Heart*; Men may call theſe *Forms* and *Modes* by the Name of *Religion*, but they are not ſo, and thoſe who call them ſo, either are deceived themſelves, or would deceive others. If theſe *Forms* ſeem not indifferent to *all*, they ought to be *impoſed* on *none*. To what good Purpoſe a ſtrict *Attachment* to *Forms* ſerves, many Parts of *Chriſtendom* feel at this Day, this Kingdom has felt. And at beſt, the laying too great a Streſs upon them, will, inſtead of *Religion*, *establiſh* only her *Counterfeit*, the *Shadow* inſtead of the *Thing itſelf*: And what great Benefit the *Civil Government* is like to receive from hence, all may judge; what Engines it has furniſh'd, and what real Miſchiefs have been from hence derived on States, we may be abundantly ſatiſfied from Hiſtory. In ſhort, Sir, *Religion* need not, ought not, cannot be ſubject to the Cognizance or Controul of the *Civil Magiſtrate*, otherwiſe than as

it respects the *Essentials* of *Civil Government* in its *Nature*.

If *Authority* were necessary in this case, I wou'd put you in mind of what the learned * *Grotius* says on this Head ; an unquestionable Authority, and of great Weight in the *British Parliament*. This Author says, "That the *true Religion* which is the same in all Ages, is built upon *four fundamental Principles*: *First*, That there is a *God*, and he but *One*. Next, that he is not any of those Things which we *see*, but something more *sublime*. *Thirdly*, That *God* takes care of *Human Affairs*, and judges them with the strictest *Equity*. And *Fourth*, That the same *God* is the *Creator* of all Things but Himself. Those who deny these, says he, cannot be *entirely Blameless*; but because we are here discoursing of *Punishments*, continues the Author, and those such *Punishments* as relate to *Men*, we must not confound the

Notions

* De Jure B. ac P. L. 2. C. 20,

Notions themselves, with the *Manner* and *Measure* of our *dissenting* from them.” According to him, the *Notions* which alone are necessary to the *establishment* of *Religion* are these two, That there is a *God*, and that he has the *Care* of *Human Affairs*: And ’tis his *Judgment*, That those who first attempt to destroy those universal *Notions*, ought, on account of *Human Society* in general, which they thus without any just *Ground* insult and injure, to be severely punish’d, as in all well-govern’d *Communities* has been usual: But as to other general *Notions* concerning the *Unity*, *Nature* and *Worship* of the *Deity*, Errors in these, he thinks, are excuseable; and that they certainly do not deserve *Human Punishment*. And as to *Christianity* in particular he holds the same; and shews that his *Opinion* is warranted by the *Holy Gospel*, several *Passages* of which he instances in.

Tho’

Tho' *Religion* itself can be only *Internal*, and established in the *Heart*, yet the *Publick Exercise* of it and *Religious Assemblies*, are allow'd by all to be proper, and even necessary to Cultivate and Support it: And therefore the *Civil Magistrate* very wisely and prudently compels all his Subjects to resort to some Place of *Publick Worship*. But this Profession and Publick Worship require no certain *Mode*. Penalties to enforce this general Exercise are justifiable, as they tend to make Men *Religious*, that they may thereby become *good Subjects*; but cease to be so, when they are inflicted to force them to such a *Form* and *Manner* of performing it as is not agreeable to their *Inward* Sentiments and *Religious* Opinions. All the *Civil Magistrate* can be concern'd to see to, is that Mens *Fundamentals* are right, as they are examinable by *outward* Acts; and that so far only, as *Civil Government* may be affected by them; and to take such prudent Methods as may seem necessary

fary to create, establish, and support these *Fundamentals* in Men's Minds. Beyond this his *Jurisdiction* has no Place, and his Concern should not extend. But, Sir, however effectual these Penalties may be to bring People together, whatever Instructions they may there receive, unless the *Lives* of their *Teachers* be conformable to their Doctrine, unless those in exalted Stations set *publick Examples* of Virtue, Congregations will assemble to little purpose, and Preaching will be vain: And so far will the Generality be from improving in real *Religion*, that they will be apt to think the whole Mockery, or something worse.

Religious Societies have been supposed analogous to *Civil Societies*; and from hence *Government* in the former, has been thought as necessary as in the latter. It is difficult to understand this without distinguishing between the Interest of the *Church*, and the Rights of *Religion*. But,
Sir,

Sir, suppose any particular *Mode* of Public Worship, has been adopted, and is countenanced by the State, and this becomes *National*; suppose a Church be establish'd, and a *Scheme* of *Church Government* erected; suppose the *Temporal Interests* of *Church-Men* are provided for and secured by the *Legislature*; suppose peculiar *Rights* and *Civil Power* be connected with the *Sacred Office*, and *Church* and *State* be so blended, as to be deem'd but *one Constitution*: Yet may Men, without Prejudice to this System, be indulged in their own *Religious Sentiments*, and without any danger to the *Temporal Interests* of *Church-Men*, be suffer'd to save their own Souls in the Way they themselves think most effectual. 'Tis a needless Outcry, to say the Repealing the *Corporation and Test Acts*, would be breaking in upon the *Constitution*: At this rate the Constitution would be changed every Session of *Parliament*, and every new *Act* might be deem'd an Alteration of it. This
is

is to confound the *general Frame* of Government, with the *particular Methods* of Governing; *Standing Laws* with such as are only *Occasional*; *Fundamental* with *Temporary*. I wish, however, that those who pretend to be so fearful of affecting the Constitution in this Instance, shew'd the same Concern on all other Occasions.

And as little Reason is there to say, that the Act of *Union* has put it out of the *Power* of the *Parliament* to give the *Protestant Dissenters* of *England* the Relief they are suing for. In that Act are inserted two several Acts, made previously to it, one in *England*, for *Securing the Church of England, as by Law Establish'd*; the other in *Scotland*, for *Securing the Protestant Religion and Presbyterian Church-Government within the Kingdom of Scotland*; and these Acts are by the Act of *Union*, made *fundamental and essential* Parts of the *Union*, and declared to be *essential and fundamental* Parts of the

Articles of Union. Now 'tis plain these are to be look'd on as Terms made by each of the Contracting Parties, as a Security against the Inroad of each other, or the Power or Authority, which by the *Union*, either might claim over the other; and cannot be consider'd in any other Light. Each provided for the Security of their own Religion; and cannot be supposed to have been solicitous for the Preservation of that Religion, which Theyself did not profess, and which they were taking care should not be imposed upon them. It can never be pretended that this Act intended to abridge their own Power, with regard to Themselves, nor can it be imagined that either of the Contracting Parties will think it a Breach of the Condition or Articles of *Union*, to relieve those of their own Persuasion, and allow them their undoubted Right of exercising their own Religion, free and unrestrain'd. And were those of *Scotland* to pretend, if that could be supposed of them,

them, that the *Parliament* of *Great Britain* has not that Power, as to *England*, which it has, since the *Union*, actually exercised with regard to *Scotland*, in Favour of those of the *Episcopal Communion* there, all the People of *England* would deservedly look on it as an Injury and Indignity offer'd them.

But all this is founded on a Supposition, that the *Dissenters* are attempting an Alteration in the *Establishment* of the *Church of England*. 'Tis a false Supposition; the Repeal which they desire of the *Corporation and Test Acts*, is, *in itself*, no such Alteration. These are not *Fundamentals*; these are not *Essentials*; they are not necessary to the Support of it; they never *were* necessary, neither at the Time of making them, nor since, I mean so far as they extend to *Protestant Dissenters*. That there was no such Necessity at the Time of making them, would not be difficult to shew; but 'tis enough to say, they

were made in the Reign of CHARLES the Second: And what has made them more necessary since, it will be impossible to find out. This *Repeal* cannot *tend* to any such Alteration: In what Manner, and by what Means can it? Perhaps by admitting a greater Number of *Protestant Dissenters* into *Places* of Trust and Power. Is not the Way free and open into the *House of Commons*, without any such *Test*, where only such an Alteration can be brought about? But suppose them, Sir, possess'd of ever so many *Places*; suppose them even in the *Administration*; suppose them to have the Command of the *Treasury*; invested with ever so much *Power*; how much soever *supported*; suppose them to be the *Majority* in the *House of Commons*: it would be impossible to effect any such Alteration; it would be vain and weak to attempt it; as impossible, Sir, as vain and as weak, as to bring about or attempt an *Excise Scheme*, against the *Sense* of the *Nation*. And till this be done, the
Church,

Church, with all its *Appendages* is Safe, and out of Danger: *Church-Men*, with their *Dignities*, *Benefices*, *settled Maintenance*, *Ecclesiastical Power and Jurisdiction*, will be *sacred* and untouch'd. And such of them as make an Outcry, as if the *Church* would by this Repeal be in Danger, give a false Alarm; and are themselves the Disturbers of the Publick Quiet. And as such Opposition from them, is *unchristian* and *oppressive*; so it argues a want of Steadiness, or something worse, in such as pretend they dare not give the *Dissenters* any Relief, for fear of disgusting those at the Head of the establish'd *Church*, tho' at the same time, they confess the Thing in itself, *just* and *reasonable*. Men of Understanding, Honesty, and a due Regard for others concern'd, will pursue the Measures which *Justice* and *Equity* point out, without fearing the *Ill-Humour* of those who may take Offence without Cause, and against Reason.

As to the Troubles of a late Reign, very unjustly are they charged on the *Dissenters*, as the Cause of them; *Arbitrary Measures* supported by an *Ambitious Priest* and *wicked Statesmen*, gave Rise to those Commotions that brought on the Catastrophe of the Tragedy, which a *Standing Army* at last finish'd. 'Tis a Melancholy Scene: The dear Liberty of our Country, sick of many dangerous Wounds, and just expiring, till the eager Haste, and perhaps Unskillfulness of those who endeavour'd to prevent the Gangreen's reaching the Vitals, left her defective in a principal Member: This, Time and Strength of Constitution, on a return of Reason, at length restored; but *Liberty* once buried, seldom revives. The Fate of that unfortunate Prince, whose Reign I am speaking of, is to be lamented; but our greatest Concern is due to *Liberty*, of all Things the most Valuable, the most Sacred; and whose Loss, always most deserves our Tears.

May

May the like never happen again ; but great and God-like as the Virtues and Abilities of any Man may be, in all other respects, I believe all honest Men, and Friends to *Liberty*, wish that every Enslaver of his Country may be effectually check'd by those Means, whatever they be, which themselves have made necessary. The Foundation of the Calamities of that Reign, it is well known, were laid in the preceding one ; and the Opposition begun ; and (give me Leave to say) well begun, before the *Dissenters* concur'd in it, who are, in truth, to be consider'd, not as the first Promoters, but as accidental Agents in it : For it was the Cause of *Liberty*, not of *Religion*. And tho' at last Matters were carried too far, and one amongst them, by Ambition, and putting himself at the Head of a Standing Army, was guilty of an Usurpation, 'tis but what any other who has a Standing Army at his Command, where Circumstances invite, may in like manner attempt and effect, tho' no
Dissenter.

Dissenter. And there is no more Reason now for excluding *Dissenters* from Places in the Government, on account of what happen'd during that unhappy Reign, than there is for excluding a Man who wears a Coat of the Colour of *Cromwell's*. And as well might it be said, that *Church-Men* ought to be excluded, because they concurr'd in turning out King JAMES *the Second*, and bringing about the *Revolution*; lest hereafter they should attempt the like, on Pretence of the like Necessity. But a strong Argument to shew that the *Dissenters* were not the Cause of the Calamities of the Reign of CHARLES *the First*, or when they at first engaged, did not intend that Matters should be carried so far, may be inferr'd, by remembering how instrumental they afterwards were in Restoring his Son.

But, Sir, whatever they may be supposed to have been then guilty of, what *Disposition*, what *Temper* have they shewn since,

since, what do they now shew? Are they
 the *Enemies*, or have they in all Instances,
 and on every Occasion acted, as
Friends to the present Government? And
 this when under the Restraint and Oppres-
 sion of *Test Laws*? Have they not born
 these patiently? With too much Patience,
 if that shall be turn'd to their Prejudice.
 Or if they were really inclined to Opposi-
 tion; what is there in the present Govern-
 ment or Administration for them to oppose?
 What bad Measures? What ill Schemes?
 What to be found fault with, or com-
 plain'd of? How could they, when the
 publick Measures are so well concerted,
 so universally approved, when every thing
 is in the most profound *Peace*, and the
 whole Nation manifests the highest *Satis-*
faction, how could they stir or make any
 disturbance, were they ever so disposed or
 inclin'd to it? It cannot be, Sir.

Why then is this Mark of Infamy con-
 tinued on these Gentlemen? Why are they

D

excluded

excluded as Disaffected and ill Subjects? Why thus persecuted? The most proper Means to keep Subjects peaceable and quiet, is an *equal Administration*, and the uniting them in one *Common Interest*; *needless* Distinctions create *real* Differences. If Divisions and Animosities hence arise, those are to blame who thus divide them. 'Tis often the Art and Management of a Minister, to raise or keep up Dissentions in the Nation, which may draw off the People's Attention from his Measures, and disunite them, in what ought to be their joint Concern. This is far from being the wisest or most prudent Management. True Wisdom and Policy are shewn in pursuing a Course directed by Universal Principles founded on Enlarged Notions, which alone are true, steady and secure. Partiality often occasions Ferments in a Nation; while an open, virtuous, honourable Conduct, unlimited and confined by particular, short-sighted Views, will always make and preserve a Minister Superior

rior to any who might vainly attempt to disturb him, and who, if they do so, must necessarily, by the Law of Nature and Course of Human Things, subside with Disappointment and Mischief to Themselves. But in such a Case, Sir, none will attempt it, none will be inclined to it. The People are too well pleased, if they are but tolerably well used, to be willing to give the Government any Disturbance: They are unjustly accused of *Inconstancy* and *Discontent*; they never are unsteady, but when those at the Helm do not steer properly, and keep an even, uniform, steady Course. I appeal to History, and every one's Observation, whether the People are ever the *Aggressors*, or whether they ever murmur or grow restless, without being first, and that for a long time, ill used. Before the Constitution can be at all affected, the State must be very sick and distemper'd; and when that is the Case, she may meet with many Annoyances to fret and disturb her: But this

cannot proceed from little Discontents or Grievances of a *part* of the People only, but from great, universal, and national Uneasiness : Tho' 'tis too well known, that the Constitution is much oftner poison'd by those who pretend to be her *Guardians*, to make their own Fortunes by her *Death* or *Ruin*. However, Sir, I take it for an incontestable Truth, that any Government best provides for its Quiet and Security, by removing as far as may be, all Cause and Pretence for Complaining.

It is, I know, the *Policy* of some, to neglect their *real Friends*, whom they think sufficiently engaged by *Principle* and *Affection*; and by *Favours* to hold Friends, not otherwise to be depended on, or gain over Enemies. Such a Policy is dishonourable and dishonest. But none will wonder that it is the Management of those who are wicked enough to think, and weak and incautious enough to declare

clare, that none are *really honest* but Fools, and that others put on the *Shew* and *Appearance* of *Honesty*, only to serve their private Ends. I am told, Sir, there are *such* Men in this Nation, and *those*, Men of no small Power. If it be true, I am sorry, not only that they are in any *Power*, but that they are *at all*.

THE REPEAL which the *Dissenters* are now applying for, they are content should be call'd a *Favour*; tho' at the same time they cannot but think, that they shall obtain by it no more than their *undoubted Natural Right*. As to the Favours which *in consequence* they will be put into a Capacity of receiving, they will be still in the Power and Discretion of *his Majesty*, to bestow on those he shall think *most deserving*: *His Majesty's* Choice will become more unconfined, since he will have a greater Number of Subjects free for his Service; and none surely will doubt but this Choice will continue

tinue always to be guided by the greatest Wisdom and Judgment.

But what shall we say of those among the *Whigs* themselves, who professing to be such, yet oppose the Relief of the *Dissenters*, to whom, if they are consistent with Themselves, they must always be *true Friends*: And do this, lest the *Dissenters* should be admitted to a Share of the Benefits of *Posts* and *Places*, *they* are in Possession of, and that *they* may enjoy them unrival'd: Such a Conduct shews a mean, avaricious Spirit, and proves *them* degenerate and false to their *Principles*. They would pass for the *Patrons* of *Liberty*; but all the *Liberty* *they* maintain, is that of making *themselves* *Great*, at the Expence, and by the Oppression of *others*, and that of those too, whose Pretensions and Title are the very same as their own. Intent on their own *private Interest*, and slavishly attach'd to *Men in Power*, they are well pleased to see these *Badges* and
Fetters

Fetters still continue, which were first put on their Brethren by the profess'd Enemies of *Whiggism*. Thus do these *Apostates*, under the Name of *Whigs*, espouse the Notion and follow the Practice of *Tories*, which *they* once so heartily condemn'd and oppos'd. But *such Men*, as they must have abandon'd all *Conscience*, so will they be lost to all *Shame*.

I hope, Sir, it will not seem *preaching* to you, to observe, that by these *Test Laws*, that which is regarded as the most *holy Institution* of our Religion, and should be thought on and performed with the greatest *Reverence*, is *prostituted* to *base* and *unworthy* Purposes. Those who express so great a Regard and Concern for the *Church*, should shew some for *real Religion*. It is a Scandal to *true Christians*, to see Men, who too often are put into Posts and Offices upon Terms, and to perform Services, which honest Men would *scorn*, and *themselves* dare not avow; to
see

see *such*, and many *such* there are, unconcern'd for *past* Crimes, and prepar'd for and intent on *new*, come to join in that *Holy Communion*, and defile its sacred Rites. Men, who by reason of their Immoralities, would not have ventured, are, on these Occasions, tempted to partake against their Consciences. Worldly Honour and Profit are strong Allurements, and such Temptations as few can resist. 'Tis true, they *may* come prepared, and if they do not, 'tis chargeable (you'll say) on themselves : But they many in fact, too frequently neglect their Duty on these Occasions, is palpable ; and 'tis but *Charity* to remove out of People's Way, all that may occasion them to sin. Even Men, who when free from this Bias, come with Minds and Hearts properly disposed, may well be suspected at these Times, to withdraw something of their Devotion from Heaven, and pay some little Regard to their *new Acquisitions*, which they are now compleating their *Titles* to : At least this
may

may be without Injury supposed of such, who tho' Men of good Moral Lives, come only to serve these Turns; Instances of which are common. But give me leave to say, Sir, that where none of these is the Case, yet by connecting any thing of a *worldly* Nature with this Part of *Divine* Worship, which was instituted for far other Purposes, the Institution is degraded and debased. This works on the Minds of the People, and makes the *Solemnity* seem but insignificant *Farce*. It is not absurd to suppose that to this, besides some other fatal Causes which might indeed be named, is owing the great Irreligion of the present Age. Destroy the *Notion* of *Religion* in the People's Minds, and *Church Establishments* will prove but of little Service to the State. *They* should consider this, who are such mighty Champions for the *Church*, and in that, as they pretend, for *Religion*.

After what has been said, I hope, Sir, it is not necessary to urge this Matter further. I am concern'd and alarm'd that *Christians* should shew so little of *Christian Spirit*, as to endeavour to keep their *Protestant Brethren* abridged of their undoubted Rights, and branded with a Mark of Infamy, merely for some slight Difference in Opinion. *True Christianity* consists in a true Christian *Benevolence*. Those who are void of this, may keep up *Forms* and *Ceremonies* to what height they please, but are really, and in Heart, no *Christians*. And this Benevolence must be exceedingly weak, if indeed it can be said to be at all, in those who can support or allow of *Persecution*, in any Shape or Disguise, in any degree. Protestants profess *Moderation* and *Indulgence*; but *Power* turns their *Heads*, and changes their *Hearts*. For God's-sake, Sir, let there be an End of these needless and pernicious Distinctions; let not the *Church of England*,

land, whose Reputation has been so great throughout the Christian World, continue a Stain on itself, and it's own Character, by affecting their *Fellow Christians*, their *Brother Protestants*, and *Fellow Subjects*, with an Ignominy which they do not deserve. *Let us not weaken still the weaker Side by our Divisions.* And as in time of *Danger*, we have heartily join'd and been unanimous to repel the Common Enemy; so let us with mutual Benevolence and Affection, reap and enjoy together, the Blessings of *Peace* and *Safety*. Let it appear that we are *Christians* not only in *Name*.

I hope, Sir, this will be the last time you will be troubled on this Head; because I hope, the Occasion will not remain for future Applications. To this End, I beg your Concurrence for the Relief of the *Dissenters*, and your Vote in their Behalf; and am, with the profoundest Respect,

S I R, *Your*, &c.

PAge 26. Line 22. for *confined* read
unconfined. p. 32. l. 13. for *they* r. *that*.
